UNITED NATIONS

A S

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

A/52/981
S/1998/631
10 July 1998

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Fifty-second session
Agenda item 61
QUESTION OF CYPRUS

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-third year

Letter dated 9 July 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Cyprus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to bring to your attention the following developments regarding the continuing destruction of the religious and cultural identity of the occupied part of Cyprus.

The policy of the Government of Cyprus is to protect and maintain all cultural, historical and religious monuments in Cyprus. Unfortunately, this policy is not adhered to in the illegally occupied areas controlled by Turkish troops.

The most recent documented violations are the desecration and partial destruction of the Church of the Holy Virgin, which is being used as a potato warehouse, in the village of Makrasyka, and the wanton and callous vandalism of the adjoining cemetery.

Disregarding all tenets of contemporary civilization, violating the fundamental principles of safeguarding and maintaining cultural and religious monuments, as outlined by international law, and systematically proceeding with its policy of changing the demographic character of the occupied area of Cyprus, Turkey, in the 24 years of its illegal occupation, has done more irreparable and wilful damage to the culture of Cyprus than it has ever been subjected to in its long history.

It is time that the indifference of the international community towards the above-mentioned Turkish actions be stopped.

Already over 500 churches have been vandalized, destroyed or looted. These crimes are in violation of the 1954 Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and the Declaration of the Principles of International Cultural Cooperation adopted by the General Conference of the

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. It should be reiterated that these acts of destruction are being promoted by Turkey in keeping with its policies and long-term expansionist plans against Cyprus.

I would be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 61, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Sotirios ZACKHEOS
Ambassador
Permanent Representative